

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 12, 2008

MINUTES

1. Call to Order – 8:35 am by Marilyn Wilkinson
2. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK
 - None
3. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS ON ANY ITEM NOT ON TODAY'S AGENDA
 - Doug Goad – There are a couple of coastal clean-up days coming up on 9/21 at Batiquitos Lagoon and 9/20 at San Elijo. We are going through evaluations in Encinitas about fitness camps, surf camps and other activities that use beaches and parks. My initial take is that it is good to see people getting out and doing things whether it is a private group or company, but you can run into the issue of having these facilities available and open to the public. So we are going through the review and trying to find the balance of these types of camps and public use as well as safety concerns.
 - Marilyn Wilkinson – I thought that a lot of the issues came from these camps and groups that were coming into the parks and beaches without any permits or contracts and there was a big liability issue.
 - Brian Albright – We contract with the City of Coronado for our surf camps and they regulate both for-profit and non-profit camps and require both groups to have permits and designate areas that these groups are allowed to go.
 - Marilyn Wilkinson – I received the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Sweetwater Park Loop Trail and have some concerns and issues with the proposed alignment. When the SR 125 Freeway came in many years ago and went through the Spring Valley community, the mitigation was used for the Sweetwater Summit park improvements, but many of the residents that were really impacted by this freeway do not use this park and therefore do not receive the mitigation benefits from it. A lot of the property that runs by this trail and to the lake is Caltrans property and listed as a proposed freeway, but they have been leasing out sections of this property. I have been talking with the Supervisor about this and would like to get a revocable contract for a park near the edge of La Presa on the trail. I have already taken this to the CSA and plan to take it to the Planning Group.
4. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 8, 2008 MINUTES
 - Approval of August 8, 2008 Minutes
 - Rob Hutsel – On my comments under number five I asked if there were any volunteer groups that worked at the park.
MOTION TO APPROVE AUGUST 8, 2008 MINUTES AS CORRECTED – ROB HUTSEL, 2nd ROGER UTT
ALL IN FAVOR – 6-0-0

5. DEPARTMENT REPORT – Mary Niez

- Distributed the department's August accomplishments information sheet.
 - ♦ The It's How We Live in Spring Valley was a big success with over 900 attendees at the event.
 - ♦ There are currently two erosion control projects going on--at El Capitan and William Heise.
 - Marilyn Wilkinson – I drove past William Heise the other day and saw that you were drilling a well, which was very interesting.
 - Brian Albright -- Water and septic are always big issues at all of our parks and we are continually trying to improve our facilities.
 - ♦ Since August 15th we have added over 3,000 acres to the Ramona Grasslands. They are the 1,176 Davis-Eagle and Oak Country I; 1,372 Gildred Ranch; and 480 Highland Valley Partners and Oak Country II.
 - Rob Hutsel – I would like to say thank you for the Ramona Grasslands, this is a great thing. Also, the River Park Foundation is proceeding with the purchase of 385 acres at the top of El Capitan Open Space Preserve.
 - Rod Groenewold – Who takes the lead when you are digging a well? I know that in Vista when you dig a well the Vista Irrigation District also claims rights to all subterranean water. The City of Vista has announced their intent to drill at specific parks for irrigation water.
 - Brian Albright -- We have not experienced that type of controversy except for in Julian and are still currently dealing with that situation.

6. PLDO and CSA Fund Balance Reports – Denbigh Dickson

- Distributed the PLDO and CSA reports.
- These reports are the final year end for FY 2007-08 and the new first report for FY 2008-09.
 - ♦ Marilyn Wilkinson – I am very worried about the Highlands Ranch development that is coming into our community and I know that they are putting in some little pocket parks within the community and do you know if DPLU is going to allow them to not pay their full amount of fees.
 - ♦ Brian Albright -- These reviews now come to us instead of DPLU and we make the recommendation. DPLU can appeal our decisions to the LUEG office, however this is very rare. There is potential for this development to get a partial credit for some of their small parks, but they will have to provide a minimum amount of acreage under the new revised ordinance for general public use. It is always good to have the community support when we are trying to make the developers comply with these new ordinances and guidelines for having not only small community parks, but general public use parks as well. We have done a lot of research and gone through a lot of community design best practices and found the balance of having those small local parks that people can walk to, but also the necessity for larger active cardiovascular parks that benefit the entire community, which is one of the reasons for PLDO.
 - ♦ Doug Goad – I have also noticed that some of the small features like the par walking courses with small activities are a great asset and are highly used by the community. If anyone wants to see a very unique play structure that was

donated by the playground company it is Las Verdes Park in Encinitas by Quail Botanical Gardens.

- We just opened one of these par walking courses in Spring Valley and it has been a huge success and we have now gotten approval for another at Lindo Lake.

7. OVRP-TJRV TRAIL CONNECTION – Maryanne Vancio

- An update was previously provided on this project. Dr. McCoy and Elizabeth from the City of Imperial Beach and I went out in search of a route that would be a connection of the trails from the OVRP to the TJRV. We knew that it would be difficult to find a route for a multi-use trail that would get us through.
- Therefore, we decided to find and designate a route and then work from there.
- We started at the Home Depot area at the edge of the OVRP and we began walking. Most of the area is pretty urban, but we found a route going along the water drainage channel, by a school, through a park, onto Hollister to the road right-of-way and made our way to the TJRV Staging Area.
- This is not a very pretty route, but it is a route that is just about two miles long.
- It is not the ideal trail experience, but I tried to emphasize that you can put up various trail signs along the way letting people know where they are on the route and then using the local businesses, schools, etc to get people out
- One of the other issues is that all of this area is within the City of San Diego, so we do not have jurisdiction over the area.
- I know that we have gotten support for this route connection from Chairman Cox and the City of Imperial Beach for the opportunities this route can provide.
 - ♦ Rob Hutsel – Is the land privately or publicly owned? I ask because I know that once you start putting up signs and posts and designate it a route or trail you may get some property owners and issues of liability.
- Most of the land is public and road right-of-way with a few different areas that are privately owned.
- The County of San Diego also has an indemnification ordinance of which we can't make the City of San Diego use, but I believe that they have a reciprocal type of ordinance. I don't know exactly what there specific policies are, but there are state laws and regulations that cover this type of trail and private property owners.

8. SWEETWATER TRAIL CONNECTION UPDATE – Maryanne Vancio

- If you look at the very east end of the Sweetwater trails they are by San Miguel Road which dead ends by the substation, we have an agreement with SDG&E to use their utility access roads (not their easements) for trails and it is a blanket agreement.
- When we find an access road that we want to use for trails we incorporate them into the master agreement. This was the first one that we did and there are some access roads through here that we have a signed exhibit on.
- This location was easier because SDG&E owns most of the trail land.
- The trail goes to the end of San Miguel Road and then ends at the edge of the City of Chula Vista.
- From this location there is a proposed trail connection to the OVRP, however I don't know how far the City of Chula Vista has gotten with this section of trail.
 - ♦ Rod Groenewold – You mentioned SDG&E and I was wondering if with the issues they are having with maintenance liability if this would be a great time to try and get them to open up some of the land in the back country.
- If we can identify specific land that would make a connection, we can do this.

9. GREEN TECHNOLOGY – Brian Albright

- We are working hard to be at the forefront of the green movement and each of our divisions is doing their part to make this a reality.
- Distributed our green checklist.
- We began using this green checklist about two years ago for any new park development project in the initial screening/start of a project to determine which of these items that we think we can realistically incorporate into the project.
- The Board of Supervisors has also now taken action and stated that any new buildings built will have a minimum of the standard LEED certification.
- We recently completed the Goodan Ranch Center and this is set for a Silver LEED certification. The San Elijo Nature Center is currently under construction and should be completed at the end of the year and we are hoping to get a Gold LEED certification for this structure.
- We are also looking at a new project to replace the irrigation systems at about eight of our parks that would monitor the weather, saturation levels, daylight, and more and regulate the sprinkler systems to keep from using excess water. This will be a huge benefit and savings for us as a department and the county as a whole.
 - ♦ Doug Goad – I know that there is always some hesitation with solar power conversions because of the time it takes to recover the initial costs. I know that the county was also doing a push for the hybrid vehicles and there was a time that it seemed like it would take a long time to recover those costs as well, but with the change in gas prices this is no longer the case and they are repaying for themselves quickly.
 - ♦ Roger Utt - I know that there seems to be a push for solar, but the current solar panels are not very efficient in using all of the sun's rays and are only able to convert about 7% of the light into energy, therefore do take a long time to recover the costs. Although they are on the cutting edge and researching this and soon there will be panels that are able to convert a significant amount of energy.

10. CALTRANS PROJECTS IN SWEETWATER PARK – Gustavo Godoy

- Showed concept plan of campground expansion project and plant pallet for the project.
 - ♦ Rob Hutsel – It kind of jumps out at me that we spend a lot of time and money removing palm trees and I see that they are listed on this pallet.
- The palm listed on this pallet is Washington, which is a native palm.
 - ♦ Roger Utt – I go back to the drought tolerant landscaping pallet and I look at what is appropriate for this particular location and in general what is the County's overall direction on this issue.
- Board Policy is to make native landscaping a priority in all of the areas where it is feasible, which includes most of our parks. In some of our smaller local parks we have approval to use some of the non-native species because of location, terrain and necessity, but overall it is a native pallet.
- The grass areas in this plan are very minimal and the few areas of turf that we do have are in specific locations that we feel will be used by patrons for picnics and activities.
- We also worked a lot with Caltrans and the community in developing the pallet for this project.

11. Adjournment at 10:00 am

ATTENDEES:

John Carroll, District 1

Marilyn Wilkinson, District 2

John Degenfelder, District 2 (arrived at 9:00 am)

Doug Goad, District 3

Roger Utt, District 4

Rob Hutsel, District 4

Rod Groenewold, District 5

Brian Albright, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Mary Niez, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Sabrina Hicks, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Denbigh Dickson, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Gustavo Godoy, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Maryanne Vancio, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation

Sean O'Neill, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation